

A KING FROM THE ISLAND of BALLY or GALLE.



PLATE I

THE BIRTH OF THE IDEA OF BALI*

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Cultures are not captured by simple empirical reportage; least of all Bali. Cultures are fabricated by matching available ideas and images against the daily lives and historical conditions of elusive isolates in time and space. For this reason ethnology straddles the history of ideas. And this is as true today as in the sixteenth century.

Any holistic ethnological image is distorted, since it necessarily preselects certain features of a cross-cultural encounter for extra emphasis. To typify an entire culture by glossing its political authority (e.g., "a kingdom") or its general subsistence (e.g., "a peasantry"), or to characterize it as a collection of "village communities" or some alternative abstraction is often to omit important aspects of the self-conceptions of the inhabitants themselves or some sector of them. Moreover, an ethnological blazon, especially if hastily contrived, can lock in general perspectives on a culture which may endure for centuries and confine the questions asked by informed visitors who have inevitably been briefed by the limited accounts available to them. Bali--so rich an ethnographic terrain in matters of religion, subsistence, marriage, and hierarchy--also generated a provocative set of typifying efforts by the earliest European explorers to come in contact with it. Just why the first Dutch observers (and their first English copyist) were obliged to construe Bali as a benevolent monarchy with harmonious subjects is a complex topic for social, political, and colonial history. Our aim here is merely to help prepare the ground for such studies by perusing the vivid stereotypes and conceptual footholds through which the earliest observers generated an ethnological idea to encompass their distinctive contact experience. The "Bali" that emerged, partly as a reflex of sixteenth and seventeenth century expectations and preconceptions, endured for a long time; and it has not been altogether abandoned today.

*This study is a somewhat altered version of a section in my forthcoming book, *The Anthropological Romance of Bali, 1597-1972: Dynamic Perspectives in Marriage and Caste, Politics and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press). Other field studies that relate to its themes are James A. Boon, "The Progress of the Ancestors in a Balinese Temple Group (pre-1906-1972)," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV, 1 (1974), pp. 7-25; and Boon, "The Balinese Marriage Predicament: Individual, Strategical, Cultural," *American Ethnologist*, III, 2 (1976), pp. 191-214. Many thanks to Ben Anderson for detailed comments on an earlier draft, to Jim Siegel for the opportunity to present the material to Cornell's Southeast Asia Program and Modern Indonesia Project, and to Clifford Geertz for allowing me to discuss it at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. I also acknowledge with gratitude support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

From the Anecdotal to the Sensational

The first images of Balinese culture were happily inscribed on western consciousness following a stop there in 1597 by Cornelis de Houtman's renowned *eerste schipvaart* to the East Indies. Evidence exists that Magellan's expedition had sighted "Java Minor" some eighty years earlier, that the Portuguese had contacted Bali at mid-century, and that Sir Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish predated Houtman's arrival by a few years.¹ The island's name was known from a list of the Lesser Sundas obtained in 1521 by Magellan's scribe Pigafetta.² But the initial representations of Balinese customs to enter the western record were both fruits of Houtman's final, perhaps least productive, and definitely most appealing stop.

Most twentieth century commentators on the history of Dutch-Balinese relations draw pleasure from the fact that they began not with a shot, but a seduction:

The island had nothing to offer in the form of trade, but there were other attractions--a carefree way of life and comely women. . . . Two young men found these charms irresistible, and the fleet sailed without them.³

Covarrubias exaggerates this point in relating that Houtman and his men "fell in love with the island" and "after a long sojourn . . . [they actually stayed less than a month] returned to Holland to report the discovery of the new 'paradise'; others refused to leave Bali."⁴ In fact, we have no clear idea why these sailors abandoned their shipmates. The official report on Bali was not quite ecstatic, merely relatively favorable in light of difficulties experienced by the beleaguered expedition in establishing trade agreements in Java. To the weary explorers, Bali became a pause for recuperation before returning home.

Maps and reports of Bali were completed and published by 1598, even though the island appeared useless for the spice trade. Its size and mountainous profile lent themselves well to sixteenth century guides to navigation; Bali's different volcanoes are immediately identifiable from the first drawings. In 1598 a map appeared which illustrated the *raja* and battling armies mentioned in a verbal account.⁵

¹Willard A. Hanna, *Bali and the West* (New York: American University Fieldstaff Reports, Southeast Asia Series, 12, 14, 1971), pp. 1-2.

²Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol. I, *The Century of Discovery*, Books I and II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 2.

³George Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963, p. 96.

⁴Miguel Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), p. 29.

⁵In the following discussion I employ three volumes of a twentieth century edition by the Linschoten Vereeniging (volumes VII, XXV, and XXXII of its works) of the sixteenth century accounts: G. P. Rouffaer en J. W. Ijzerman (eds.), *De Eerste Schipvaart der Nederlanders Naar Oost-Indië onder Cornelis de Houtman, 1595-1597* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1915-29); I, *D'eerste Boeck van Willem Lodewijcksz* (1915); II,

This chart is called "crude and sloppy" in a modern commentary, but it is better appreciated as a different sort of illustration--a visual caption to communicate that the name "Baly" stood for a mountainous, many-rivered, war-waging island. Moreover, this conceptual portrait accurately situates the sacred mountain Gunung Agung and reveals the complex river drainage through the southern plains.

In 1625, the first thoroughgoing English summary of Dutch impressions of Bali (which does not forget to mention British claims of prior contact) is included by the Jacobean Samuel Purchas in his edited collection of the discovery literature left unpublished at the death of Richard Hakluyt:

. . . Baly they called Hollandiola, for the fertilitie; there they watered.

They sent to the King, who accompanied the Messenger to the shoare in a Chariot drawne with Buffals, holding the Whip in his owne hands, having three hundred followers, some with flame-formed Crises and long Spears, Bowes of Canes with poysoned Arrowes. Hee was feasted in Dishes of solid Gold. The Land is an equall and fertile plaine to the West, watered with many little Rivers (some made by hand) and so peopled that the King is able to bring into the field three hundred thousand foot, and one hundred thousand horsemen. Their horse are little like Islanders, their men blacke and using little Merchandize, but with Cotton Cloth in Prawes. The Iland is in compasse about twelve Germane miles. Their Religion is Ethnike, ordered by the Brachmanes or Bramenes, in whose Disciplines the King is trayned up. They have also Banianes which weare about their neckes a stone as bigge as an Egge with a hole in it, whence hang forth three threds; they call it Tambarene, and thinke the Deitie thereby represented: they abstaine from flesh and fish, but not (as the Javan Pythagoreans) from Marriage. Once they may marry, and when they dye their Wives are buried quicke with them. Every seventh day they keepe holy, and many other Holidayes in the yeare besides with solemne Ceremonies. Their Wives burne with their dead Husbands. Here they heard of Captaine Drakes being there eightene yeares before, and called one Strait by his name. The King observeth state, is spoken to with hands folded, by the best. The Quillon hath power there as the Chancellor in Poland. Two of their companie forsooke them and stayed on the Iland. And of the two hundred fortie nine there were now left but ninetie. In February they began their returne.⁶

Purchas (1625) distilled his overview from the lengthier Dutch logs and journals then published, taking several accompanying plates as guides

De Oudste Journalen der Reis (1925); III, *Verdere Bescheiden Betreffende de Reis* (1929). The modern commentators referred to below are Rouffaer and Ijzerman, who annotate this edition; the English map is reproduced in II, pp. 89, 202.

A fourth volume compiled by J. C. Mollema, *De Eerste Schipvaart* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1935), consolidates a chronological account (*relaas*) with more details of the relations among the Dutchmen. Here we read, for example, a speculation as to the (above-mentioned) obscure motives of those who remained in Bali: "It is not completely out of the question that the velvet eyes and comely figures of the Balinese maidens made an impression on the two youths" (p. 341).

⁶S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumous or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905, reprint of 1625 edition), V, p. 200.

to the primary features of Balinese life. These early descriptions include William Lodewyckszoon's log of the expedition which appeared in 1598; Steerman Jacob Janszoon Kackerlack's supplementary journal of the same year; and the diary of midshipman Aernout Lintgenszoon, although the availability of the latter's account to the seventeenth century reading public remains obscure.⁷

The most noticeable stylization in Purchas is that the several test stops and hesitating contacts along the Balinese coast described by Lodewycks are condensed into a single gradiose arrival. In Purchas it appears as if the Balinese king and his entourage had been awaiting the advent of the worthy West; when actually through the week diverse islanders were leading a depleted crew to water here, an anchorage there, and later asking the sailors if they hailed from the Moluccas.⁸ Purchas' sensationalism aimed at evoking a sense of splendiferous trade in commodities in order to revitalize mercantile endeavors under James I and then Charles I. By 1625, Britain's rival was Holland; accordingly Purchas highlighted the glory of Dutch cross-cultural contacts, a glory that by implication could as easily belong to Britain's monarch.

Lodewycks' original lacked such theatrics. For example, to commemorate the initial arrival of Balinese on board a Dutch vessel, he mustered nothing dramatic, merely the simple note that "many inhabitants boarded us."⁹ This "first connected description of the island of Bali from the European viewpoint"¹⁰ is relatively straightforward, methodical, and evenhanded. The merchandise-minded sailor mentions the weaving skills of Bali's western province Jembrana; he itemizes fauna, fruit, and metals; he describes weapons and assesses Balinese military strength; and he makes notes on the availability of spices and drugs. Finally we are told that Balinese engage in little or no sea trade and that Chinese come here to exchange swords and porcelain for cloth.

Such pedestrian details aside, Lodewycks' more general views of Bali were limited by the typologies at his disposal. His label of Balinese as "black" may have stemmed from his observation of the Papuan slaves who often boarded the ship *Mauritius*, or it may simply reflect a residual category not directly related to phenotype. Lodewycks knew

⁷Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1915, 1925, 1929.

⁸Such "Demilleean" restaging of initial contacts is one of the most tenacious rhetorical devices in the romantic imagery of ethnological literature. It reminds one of the sort of routinized, recurring metaphors called *topoi* by E. R. Curtius in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), ch. V. Anthropology's counterpart to *topoi* such as "the world upside down" or "boy as old man" (*puer senilis*) is "captain greets king" or more recently, "collectivity welcomes fieldworker." The *topos* remains very much with us, as evidenced by a recent television broadcast of a film made of Margaret Mead's return to one of her Pacific islands for a generation-later restudy. Ms. Mead is rowed up in a boat and the jubilant natives run out *en masse* to welcome her (evidently collectively awaited) return. We are not told how she was concealed while the crew got the beach camera into position.

⁹Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1915, p. 197.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 197n.

at least that Balinese were not "Moors"; in fact he alludes to the islanders' religion by deeming them "heathens" who "pray to whatever they first meet in the morning."¹¹ As the modern commentary explains, "heathen" here means non-Mohammedan, which is the most pertinent observation Lodewycks could have made about Balinese religion, arriving there from coastal Java. Yet his remarks entered the historical record to be repeated, nearly verbatim, a century later in an Englishman's report on Bali: "[the Balinese] are exceeding Brutish People and the Simplest of Heathens. Their God is whatever they first cast their Eye on in the Morning. . . ."¹² Following a century of Protestant reformism, heathen has come to imply "simplest." The same remark that began as a distinction in sectarian types (Christian/Mohammedan/Heathen) has become a proto-evolutionary index of backwardness. Such is the crooked path of "progress" in ethnology.

Kings, not Chiefs

Like his colleagues, Lodewycks found most impressive the office of "king," as observed when the ship's emissaries were conducted to Gelgel. He is most interested in the indigenous royal monopolies of external trade and in policies against the export of rice, to insure that the surplus would be consumed yearly (in elaborate feasts) by the innumerable inhabitants. Apart from this, Lodewycks provides the first simplified, vividly distorted portrait of Bali as an authoritarian maharaja-dom:

Besides the King is a governor that they call Quillor. He rules over the island as does the great chancellor in Poland. And beneath these stand many other lords, each governing his quarter in the name of the king, which occurs in great harmony (*eendrachticheyt*). . . .¹³

Finally, Lodewycks rounds things off by paraphrasing a royal Balinese chronicle (*babad*), which relates how some years earlier the King's close blood relatives had attempted a conspiracy against him and were subsequently banished to a neighboring island. As we shall see, this native text receives much less attention than the regal splendor of the apparently legitimate King atop his sedan chair, although the chronicle of bloodshed would have served as a more appropriate blazon of Balinese society. Only centuries later, after Berg's work on the sixteenth century Pamancangah texts from Gelgel,¹⁴ did it become completely clear that these first Dutch visitors had stumbled not into a stable realm of an unchallenged divine monarch, but into a generation-long battle between brothers and uncles and nephews for control of the Gelgel palace, marked by disastrous participation in a war in Java:

¹¹"Zy zijn Heydenen aenbiddende tghene haer des morphens eerst int gomoet comt" (*ibid.*, p. 197). A similar topos appears as early as the writings of Marco Polo. Cf. Harry J. Benda and John A. Larkin, *The World of Southeast Asia, Selected Historical Readings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 13.

¹²Christopher Frick and Christopher Schweitzer, *Voyages to the East Indies* (London: Cassell, The Seafarers' Library, 1929, first published 1700), p. 109.

¹³Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1915, p. 201.

¹⁴C. C. Berg, *Kidung Pamancangah, de Geschiedenis van het Rijk van Gelgel*, (Santpoort: Javaansch-Balische Historische Geschriften, 1929).

When early in 1597 the first Dutchmen arrived at the coast of Blangbangan, the savage war (*woestoorlog*) between Pasuruhan and Blangbangan was in full swing.¹⁵

But even as this was recognized, scholars tended to assume this state of affairs was only a temporary lapse in a stable and centralized "golden age" (*glorietijdperk*) rather than the general conditions and mechanics of "statehood" in the Balinese system. The Dutch had skirted in and out and round about a perpetual civil war, only to gain from Bali's ritual surfaces the impression of timeless central authority.

Kackerlack's much briefer piece (1598) goes on explicitly to designate the island of Baly a kingdom (*Coninkrijk*). The regal trappings, complete with scribes and priests, prevented these observers from conceptualizing Bali as tribal chiefdoms such as those known from North America. (Later, however, a chiefly level [*hoofden*] had to be added to handle certain local complexities in the chain of political authority.) Kackerlack dwells on the generosity of the islanders who bear them hogs, ducks, and many fruits and foodstuffs, and the reciprocal Dutch gifts for the King--coral drinking glasses, shoes, mirrors, etc.¹⁶ And he distinguishes what he heard about, such as a king on a buffalo cart, from what he actually observed, such as the lay of the ricefields.

Aernout Lintgens' story is by contrast a thoroughgoing narrative, complete with vivid scenic details and artfully postponed surprises. He relates his week-long adventure (February 9-16, 1597) in establishing contact with the king's ministers, in instigating correspondence with the Dutch captain, and in arranging for the delivery of the latter's gifts before his own reception at the royal palace in Gelgel. With the help of Jan the Portuguese (apparently coming from Mataram and serving as translator) Lintgens amasses much information than can only be called ethnographic; and more often than not it arose from questions posed by the King of Bali. Here is the West's first report on Balinese marriage:

Then the King asked us how old we were; I answered "around twenty-five, and Roedenborrich around twenty-three," then if we were all married; to this I answered "no," then I told how in our land the men were not married before twenty years of age, then in great surprise did he communicate that in the island of Baelle the manner was for youths to marry at twelve years and that daughters are betrothed at nine years of age.¹⁷

Lintgens describes the mode of paying the king homage, the deformed courtiers, a royal procession, the outlying palaces; we learn of the ministers' wives and concubines and impressive material wealth. He obtains a list of important "cities" and assessments of strength of arms and overall population. We also hear of a Balinese view as to why Dutch-Balinese relations are certain to be unusually friendly:

. . . the minister (*kijlloer*) . . . said that we and they are totally alike, for they saw that we eat pork meat, while no Turks or Moors

¹⁵Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1929, p. xlvi.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 1925, pp. 169-71.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 1929, p. 77.

do this, and that moreover we eat meat also on Friday and Saturday, while no Spaniards or Portuguese do. . . .¹⁸

(Of special note are the structuralist systematics of this Balinese theory of cultural variation. It employs three oppositions: meat/not-meat, pork/other meat, and sometimes/always; and it combines them differentially to articulate three categories of mankind.)

The most practical information provides additional details of Bali's commercial isolationism: how, whenever foreigners arrived to purchase cotton goods, they were not permitted to travel inland and could only stay as long as their business required, "so that they would not know anything about the Balinese treasures."¹⁹ Lintgens discloses how he exaggerated Dutch military strength to the king's aide and, showing him a map of Europe, claimed Holland was larger than China and included Germany, Scandinavia, and a portion of Russia.²⁰ There follows a sixteenth century *King and I* where an astounded monarch, after viewing himself in a triptych mirror decorated with the image of a Dutch ship, first hears tell of northern winters and ice, and then suffers a geopolitical Copernican revolution--seeing that by European maps extending to the Philippines, *Baelle* is neither the center of the universe nor even very significant.²¹ That, at least, is what Lintgens thought the king suffered.

Lintgens then relates how the Dutch emissaries arrive at the royal seat in Gelgel. There are brief but vivid descriptions of religious processions and ceremonies ("some praying to the sun, some the moon, and some an ox"²²); of pleasure gardens graced with turtledoves and many other birds; and finally of the palace itself, with its steps, distinct sections, and slave quarters. At last among the "nobles" (*edelliede*) in attendance at the court, Lintgens is dumbfounded to encounter a Portuguese-speaking Moluccan who inquires whether the monarch of Portugal is well and has been received in friendship by his counterpart in England. Bali was truly a culture of kings.

In short, Lintgens goes furthest in commending to his readers this Balinese court without understanding anything of the nature of rivalry among the island's many royal and noble houses (and to judge by later evidence, insurgent commoners as well). Moreover, none of these briefs by sixteenth century partially educated sailors displays that Puritanical, Calvinistic reaction to Indonesian customs so evident in later reports. Indeed, a generation would elapse before the official attitude of the Dutch East India Company was consolidated--that "proud burgher's revulsion of the ostentation and royal arbitrariness evident in Indonesia [which] speaks from many of the earlier records in the Company era."²³ However misunderstood, Bali's regal trappings were initially admired as such. For complex historical reasons, empathy antedated disdain.²⁴

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 90.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 93.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 86.

²³Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Dialectic of Colonial Indonesian History* (Amsterdam: Van der Peet, 1963), p. 7.

²⁴Some of these reasons can be glimpsed in Pieter Geyl's succinct account of the political and religious complexities of late sixteenth century Netherlands. Unlike their seventeenth century successors, the voyagers who first confronted Balinese

Like a Polder *chez nous*

Apart from his delight over the island's benevolent royalty, Lintgens sensed in Bali a familiar quality, most evident from his descriptions of village domestic quarters and irrigation works that assure a "surabundance of eatables." It is also proclaimed a "jonck Hollandt" with its little towns and cities so cut across by water that it is "amazing to see."²⁵ This feeling of familiarity is transformed at one point into a delusion of identity, when in his closing pages Lintgens describes a massive fortified wall along a section of Bali's southern coast. (His text was the source of a mystification that confused maps for generations to come. On the basis of no firm evidence, it has been attributed either to intoxication or to a mirage brought on by Lintgens' homesickness for the inner wall that stood in Amsterdam in the late sixteenth century.²⁶) The kernel of truth behind the delusion is Lintgens' reassured sense of *gemakkelijkheid* amidst his Balinese surroundings. We wonder today what reinforced this cross-cultural coziness, and a totally speculative answer beckons. That barren North Sea bog called in the Odyssey "a land of fog and gloom where there is no sun" had devised a delicate ecological balance somewhat reminiscent of the one found in this tropical land of volcanic fertility where the danger is paddies parched from too much sun. In the Netherlands "diking produced its own code of law. When a break occurred, drums sounded for all men to pick up their spades and rush to the scene."²⁷ The windmills, the network of canals, and the continuous repair work and silting duties related to the Dutch landscape very much as the river dams, the irrigation channels and tunnels, and their upkeep related to the Balinese landscape, where irrigation also produced its own code of law. One subsistence technology protected fertile fields from an intrusive sea; the other protected rice paddies from the ever-threatening failure of water tapped up the mountains through lands of antagonists to irrigate one's own fields before flowing on. Both ecosystems have the quality of meticulous surplus-yielding games of survival in the face of pending disaster. At least a James Michener might assume this was why the descendants of commoner Frisian-Viking dog-lovers (the legendary founders of Amsterdam), who made profits in spite of the fog and gloom, felt in harmony with descendants of Javanese ancestral gods (the founders of Hindu-Bali) who worshipped the tropical sun. It is difficult to surmise a better reason. While we shall,

ritual and hierarchy lacked a firm, dogmatic Calvinist base from which to react against Indonesian "idolatries" and "profanations." Geyl describes for our period the slow "Protestantization" from the top down and the tenacity of local Catholic officialdom; for example: "In 1593 a [Reformed] commission appointed by the States of Utrecht . . . made a tour of the province, questioning the newly installed ministers as well as the former priests. Their report gives a vivid picture of the motley and sometimes extraordinary conditions prevailing. In the large majority of villages the old priests were still functioning. . . . Several priests refused to submit, and continued to distribute 'the popish sacrament' at Easter, or at least showed a suspicious reluctance to marry their 'housekeeper'. . . . so, at this moment, were the Reformed Synods in all the seven provinces to which the Union had been reduced admonishing States assemblies and town governments to deal more severely with 'superstitions, idolatries, abuses and profanations.'" Pieter Geyl, *History of the Low Countries* (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), pp. 39-40.

²⁵Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1929, p. 85.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. xlvii, 1.

²⁷Masselman, *The Cradle*, pp. 3-5.

alas, probably never know exactly why the Dutch and the Balinese saw eye to eye, it is safe to say that in terms of domestic scale and elaborate hydrotechnology, they were made for each other. Even in 1921 Lekkerkerker was still insisting this was so in his sweeping portrait of "De Baliërs" and in particular of their irrigation unit: "A *subak* is somewhat comparable to a plot of reclaimed land at home" (*Een subak is eenigszins te vergelijken met een polder ten onzent*).²⁸

Pictorial Emblems

While Lintgens' work is a tantalizing narrative of an original attraction between different worlds, the visual record from the Houtman expedition better suggests the nature of Balinese ethnology, and perhaps of any ethnology. Three illustrations were printed with the log in 1598: (1) slaves (*slaven*) shouldering a noble's (*Edelluyd*) palanquin, (2) a king being drawn by white "buffalos" (*witte Buffels*) in a cart, sheltered by an umbrella, and (3) a wife following her dead (presumed) husband into his cremation flames to a musical accompaniment by several musicians. There are accurate aspects in the sedan chair, but the cart is a Dutch *bolderwagen*, the instrumentalists are Indian and no one in the expedition had witnessed a cremation.²⁹ In fact, the group of musicians is a near copy of an illustration of South Asian cremations in Portuguese Goa that appeared in the remarkably influential *Itinerario* [*Voyage or Passage by Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to East or Portugal's India (1579-1592)*] by the seasoned traveler Linschoten and the collector Paludamus. A copy of this major impetus to Dutch investment in exploration accompanied the Houtman expedition. Its illustrations were presumed adequate to depict things Balinese, since, according to sixteenth century concepts of cultural geography passed down from medieval cosmographies and the great Iberian chronicles, Bali was an extension of India:

With Goa as its focal point (according to the Itinerary) India stretched westward as far as Prester John's Land (Ethiopia). It included all of Southeast Asia, and it was only grudgingly admitted that China (Cathay) and Japan might have to be excluded. All of the East India archipelago fell within its boundaries: Sumatra, Java, and the Spice Islands.³⁰

Contrary to the view of some modern commentators, it was not "fantasy" to use an engraving of Goanese widow-burning to represent a reputed Balinese custom; it was simply a matter of applying the nearest known equivalent. In western eyes there was never a Bali *per se*, but only a

²⁸C. Lekkerkerker, "De Baliërs" (1921), in *De Volken van Nederlandsch Indië in Monographieën*, II (Amsterdam: J. C. van Eerde, 1943), p. 149.

²⁹Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart*, 1915, pp. 196, 202; plates 40, 41, 42. The composite version discussed below is from L. Hulsius (ed.), *Eerste Schifffart an die Orientalische Indien, so die Hollandisch Schiff, im Martio 1595 aussgefahren, und in Augusto 1597 wiederkommen, verziert . . .* (Nuremberg, 1598, 1st ed.; Frankfurt am Main, 1625, 5th ed.). The plate in question appears on p. 54 of Vol. I of the 1606 edition (Frankfurt am Mayn: Wolfgang Richter, in Verlegung Leuini Hulsii Erben). Our illustration is a copy of this plate, "Ein König aus der Insel Bally oder Galle," traced by Judy Hammond.

³⁰Masselman, *The Cradle*, pp. 71-72.

Bali derived. The original ethnological idea of Bali sprang full-grown from the records of Portuguese Goa, as in some ways it should have.

The three engravings in the Houtman account were subsequently redrawn into a composite emblem of "A King on the Island Bally," published with a summary of the Dutch reports in the famous translations of travel literature by Levin Hulsius. The Dutch bolderwagen remains the vehicle of an umbrella-shaded king, but the suttee scene has been reduced to a background embellishment-in-miniature along with a sun worshipper and another "Ethnike Brahmane," here praying before a cow. The illustration of regal Bali as followers of Surya (the sun), foregoers of beef, and prohibitors of widows surviving has been improved for the wrong reasons. By reducing the size of the suttee scene, the musical instruments have been obscured so that they cannot be recognized as Indian, Balinese, or anything else. However, this was not for the sake of ethnographic accuracy, but to produce a pleasing, balanced illustration to adorn this first of many remarkable cocktail-table books (*prachtwerk*) on Bali. The Dutch published exhaustive travel literature to compile practical information for navigation and commercial strategies; the Elizabethan-Jacobean British followed suit to stimulate interest in entering the world trade system at all. But the more compendious German collections of voyages begun in the late sixteenth century "were primarily designed as entertaining and eye-catching examples of literature" in order to "appeal to the popular taste for the remote and exotic."³¹ Thus, the first popularized portrait of Bali was in some ways less misleading than the first efforts at reportage; and the Hulsius emblem remained the most elaborate overview of Balinese practices for the next two centuries.³²

The original engravings from Bali are worth considering in light of E. H. Gombrich's notion of "adapted stereotypes."³³ It so happens that these first western visual images were adapted from India, but this would be what Gombrich calls a "pathological representation" only

³¹Lach, *Asia*, I, pp. 215, 217.

³²We might note that German book editors, always enthusiastic illustrators, were here doing with the new literature of discovery (incipient ethnology) what they had done a century earlier with popular handbooks on philosophy and morals; ". . . the ubiquitous books of emblems and devices presented the Renaissance reader with verbal pictures of an exemplary moral nature. Initially these were intended to consist only of words; the first emblem writer, Andrea Alciato, defined an emblem as a pictorial epigram, a verbal image, and the first edition of his famous *Emblemata* (1531) was not designed to include illustrations. The pictures were added by Alciati's German publisher, and though they were a logical enough development of the original idea, they remained very much an addition: the pictorial part of the emblem is a function of the verbal part, and to interpret the picture correctly, one must know how to read it." Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (London: Southeby Parke Bernet; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 3. It is perhaps best to think of seventeenth century pictures, such as Hulsius', as cross-cultural blazons, with a suitable one to adorn each of the world's worthy cultures. For Elizabethan-Jacobean stereotypes and topoi on "East Indies" worship, color (e.g., tawny, sunburnt, swarthy), etc., see R. R. Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama*, (Boston: Heath, 1938), pp. 154ff.

³³E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 71.

if the aim were to distinguish carefully South Asian practices from Balinese ones. More than two hundred years were to pass before Westerners would attempt this. For the purposes of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, this pictorial record adequately emblazoned Bali as sun-worshipping, woman-immolating, and king-honoring. Little matter to the pre-Baconian of 1597 that the musical instruments were not quite that way; little matter the particular circumstances in which women were really burned, the sun really (if ever) bowed to, etc. A major interest in the art of ethnology is to convey a sense of the *whole* society, to typify it in some compelling manner. Like any essentially metaphorical procedure, ethnology resembles the arts of visual illusionism, if one realizes there is no such thing as simple "realism" and no possible one-to-one correspondence between that which is "illusioned to" and the perceptual or conceptual apparatus by which the illusion is perpetrated. Rather in both visual representation and ethnology (distinguished explicitly from ethnography, insofar as ethnology hopes to "capture the whole"):

Copying . . . proceeds through the rhythms of schema and correction. The schema is not the product of a process of "abstraction," of a tendency to "simplify"; it represents the first approximate, loose category which is gradually tightened to fit the form it is to reproduce.³⁴

The first South Asianized loose images of Bali sufficiently distinguished its culture from Holland or Portugal or anything else western readers were likely to measure it against. The representations were "tightened" only when they became ambiguous, when they appeared to reproduce two forms--Bali and South Asia--that according to other criteria were perceived to be different.

This process of gradually tightening inadequate stereotypes continues. Nor are the stereotypes applied to a constant referent, but to an ever-changing social life that has itself meanwhile been altered by incorporating new stereotypes. For example, Bali had been rearranging its death rites according to its own images of Indian cremation, which Balinese literati probably understood no better than western literati later understood Balinese cremation. Thus, the West's first caption of Balinese cremation was a *visual* stereotype of a *socio-ritual* stereotype (whether the latter was actually "brought" to Bali from India, or modeled on texts, or both). And Balinese ethnology--like all ethnology--continues to compound stereotypes, eventually producing (hopefully) tighter captions, but inevitably to the exclusion of certain cultural and social data perceived as critical from other vantages.

Hindu Spectacles and Their Consequences

The original cross-cultural captions of Bali--"absolute monarchy," "happy irrigationists"--proved particularly indelible and they long impeded investigations into the legitimacy of authority and the participation of commoners in caste categories--two complex aspects of Balinese social life. The longevity of this initial idea of Bali can be partially and indirectly attributed to the paucity of research over the next two centuries. Spiceless Bali lacked commodities save for a

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 74.

furtive slave trade--furtive at least from the vantage of European images of the East Indies, since slavery never entered as a component into Dutch emblems of and for Bali. Thus, the *general* idea of its culture as epitomized at the close of the sixteenth century went largely unrevised (although Bali became a major supplier of slaves) until the early nineteenth century, when its proximity to Java assumed great importance for British occupiers of the East Indies during the Napoleonic Wars. Observers began again to ask not merely how to handle Bali, but what it *was*.

Finally, during the latter part of the century, with the development of passenger steamers and an overseas tourist industry, those most conspicuous "productions" of Bali--its splendid temples and pervasive religious ceremonies--themselves became commodities of sorts, now that the customers could be shipped to them. The whole culture was "packaged." Lintgens' original vision of cozy domesticity got dusted off, and it has been successfully reinstated and propagated anew in popular descriptions after every notorious exception that has marred twentieth century Balinese history: the mass court suicides of 1906-8, the continuing years of Balinese violence bemoaned by Sukarno after the Indonesian Revolution, and the terroristic insurrections and marauding murder squads of 1965. Bali remains today in tourist stereotypes Asia's happy isle of homey *joie de vivre* and day-to-day artistic self-fulfillment: an appealing part-truth.

But it was in particular the other caption of Bali--"Hindu kingdom"--that distorted scholarly work. Sixteenth century accounts influenced the questions asked by Sir Stamford Raffles and later H. A. van den Borek in their seminal descriptions of Bali in the early nineteenth century. Moreover the "hinduized" view of the island was reinforced by the remarkable work of two early Sanskritists, J. Crawfurd and then R. Friedrich. Subsequent missionaries (e.g., Van Eck) and civil servants (e.g., F. A. Liefrinck) began to emphasize irrigation techniques and commoner rituals in localities apparently less influenced by the Hindu courts of the plains. Finally, V. E. Korn and other *adat* scholars in the 1920s to 1930s also tried to counter the elitist distortions. Perhaps bending too far the other way, they left us with an unlikely polarization: on the one hand, voluntarism and democratic control of subsistence and domestic and civic affairs; on the other hand, extreme status pride in statecraft and religion, decorum, language, etiquette, etc.³⁵ Moreover, throughout these approaches to Bali, when it came to holistic images of its culture, prominence was given to the Hindu-Javanese literate traditions and to what philologists could disclose of their notions of rank, ritual, and the nature of society and cosmos. Comparativist scholars, even the most populist ones, tended without exception to see the *whole* of Balinese experience through, as Swellengrebel has put it, "Hindu spectacles, and so had a distorted view."³⁶ And these spectacles, in both senses of the term, dated from 1597.

³⁵These developments in the history of Balinese studies, primarily by Dutchmen, are discussed and documented in Boon, *Anthropological Romance*. The subject of Balinese statecraft is reviewed and interpreted in the work under preparation by C. Geertz, *Negara, the Theater State in Nineteenth Century Bali*.

³⁶J. L. Swellengrebel, "Bali: Some General Information," in *Bali, Studies in Life, Thought, Ritual* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1960), p. 25.

Thus, from the very start Bali appeared South Asian, kingly, and stable. Subsequently little comparative study was made of continuities between Balinese social and ecological forms and those of less Hinduized islands in the Lesser Sundas; and almost no attention has been paid to the distinctly Oceanic quality of its culture. Yet, outside its hinduized rites and Sanskritic texts, Bali looks as much Polynesian as Indic. Moreover, while its wet-rice irrigation recalls Southeast Asia, its utilization of surplus production and its fine status gradations even within family lines suggest points further east as well. Indeed, it is provocative to reflect that, coming from the other direction, Houtman's voyagers might have emphasized not the Indic umbrella of Bali's "kings," but the physical elevation of its "chiefs"; not the Brahmana legists, but the conspicuous expenditure in mass rites of an "untrade-able" surplus; and not the worship of cows, but the tournament-like competition among leaders to maintain devoted subjects--all traits of the Pacific. If those first ethnologists had arrived in Bali two centuries later, bringing their adaptable stereotypes not from Goa but from the hierarchies of the Maori or even Hawaii, what a different picture might have resulted!